

Meeting Minutes
Weir River Estuary Park Committee
Thursday, June 29, 2021 4:00pm
Remote - Call in Meeting

This is a Tri-Town Committee, appointed by the Boards of Selectmen for Cohasset, Hingham and Hull, not a non-profit Watershed Association. Formed in 2002 approved in 2005, the goals of the WREP Committee are; to **Preserve** the rare and idyllic setting, **Expand** public access and low impact recreational opportunities, **Protect** the historical and geological integrity, **Protect** and restore natural resources and biological diversity, **Conserve** a contiguous corridor of open space and healthy habitats, **Develop** educational opportunities and foster stewardship, **Establish** Community support for land and estuarine habitat protection and maintain working relationships with Town Selectmen, Conservation Commissions, Planning Boards and Advisory, Open Space and Harbor Development committees, local Land Trusts, Land preservation organizations, and related regional state and federal agencies.

1. **Call to Order** by Sharon Allen (H), Patti Coyle (H) Dick Avery (C), Tom Bell (H), Judeth Van Hamm, Scott Plympton and Mark Buonagurio Hingham citizen attended. **Minutes** from the meeting 11/17/20 were approved for posting. The 3/26/20 were inadvertently re-approved not the 3/30/21 minutes.

2. **Brief Updates**

Cohasset:

- a. Tom Bell discussed the proposal to increase salinity flow into Straits Pond. It will require grants and funding to remove approximately 100 cu yds. of fill to improve flow. Writing grants and prep work in progress. Permits / funding will be a slow process.
- b. Midges have gone down. Perhaps due to huge rain falls. Recent rains and high heat appear to have destroyed the midges.
- c. Suggestions to reduce midges include the removal of the land bridge to the Island in the Pond and replace it with a wooden footbridge to improve water flow.
- d. It was noted that 90% of the nitrogen levels in the pond are from Cohasset, while only 10% comes from Hull. Water testing showed the Pond had a similar salinity level as the Estuary. It was noted that Hingham is a big contributor of nitrogen levels in the Estuary.
- e. SPWA: Stormwater Management Plan of Hull has uncovered issues. There is no oil/water separator. In a letter to Hull, SWPA asks for the feasibility of a proposal for a more elaborate stormwater system requested.
- f. Cohasset has a new temporary Conservation Agent, Steve Ivas

Hull:

On 6/3, Scott had a call with Hull Town Manager to discuss the proposal of constructing a foot trail to Island in Straits Pond via Eastman Road. The top question is whether the Town of Hull owns Eastman Road, or it is a private way.

- a) Ownership has not been determined by town officials. Town has been busy with reopening after COVID. Scott will follow up with Phil at the end of July.
- b) Judith noted that Lowery Reed says the town owns Eastman Rd. This is shown on a map from 1930's as a right of way. This map was provided to the town. A town official needs to research and confirm this.

- c) Scott also asked the Town Manager about the excavation proposal by Tom Bell. In his opinion, the science does not support that the excavation to improve salinity levels will reduce midges. This has been an issue since the 1700's, and midges seem to plague us in cycles.

Hingham:

- a) There will be no WREP float in the 4th of July parade.
- b) New assistant Conservation Officer has been added to help with ongoing and additional Conservation Commission work throughout Town.

3. Discussions

- a) Fish Counts at the Weir River Foundry Dam/fish ladder were perhaps a little better than last year. 6 sited, perhaps a 100 made it up the river.
- b) Review of Clean-up Day 5/1/21 Cohasset, Hingham and Hull. Successful clean-up seen in all 3 Towns with celebratory donated Nona's Ice Cream at the end enjoyed by all in attendance.
- c) Paddle on the Pond. Can we organize an outing?
- d) 90 Swans spotted on the Pond! Otters were also sighted.
- e) Let's consider having a Weir River Woods walk in October.
- f) National Estuaries Week 9/18-25/2021

4. Votes Taken- None

5. Next meeting scheduled via remote call in for Tuesday 8/31 at 4pm.